

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RIYADH 00533 031504Z
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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
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KUWAIT FOR RMO

EO 11652: NA
TAGS: AMED, CASC, CDES
SUBJ: LOCAL MEDICAL FACILITIES

REF RIYADH 374

1. REFTEL REPORTED DEGRADATION IN MEDICAL SUPPORT FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO EXPATRIATES IN RIYADH INCLUDING THE U.S. OFFICIAL COMMUNITY WITH THE EFFECTIVE CLOSING OF KING FAISAL SPECIALIST HOSPITAL (KFSH) TO NON-SAUDIS EXCEPT ON AN EMERGENCY, REFERRAL BASIS. THIS SITUATION IS DETERIORATING FURTHER, FOR REASONS ONLY INDIRECTLY RELATED TO THE ISSUE OF QUALITY MEDICAL CARE FOR FOREIGNERS IN THE KINGDOM.

2. AMCIT DR. PERDUE GOULD, KFSH DEPUTY MEDICAL DIRECTOR, HAS BEEN FIRED FOR INTERNAL HOSPITAL POLITICAL REASONS. DR. GOULD HAS PROVEN INVALUABLE SINCE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTRICTIVE HOSPITAL POLICY, HELPING USLO MANEUVER AROUND AND THROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY DISAPPROVAL AND NAY-SAYING TO SECURE MEDICAL TREATMENT AND SERVICES FOR SEVERAL NATIONALITIES REQUIRING FACILITIES NOT OTHERWISE AVAILABLE IN-COUNTRY. A
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REPLACEMENT FOR DR. GOULD HAS NOT YET BEEN IDENTIFIED, BUT WHETHER FROM THE PRESENT STAFF OR NEWLY HIRED, THE EXISTING SIEGE MENTALITY WITHIN KFSH ADMINISTRATION SUGGESTS NEITHER FLEXIBILITY NOR A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS "OUTSIDERS".

3. IN ANOTHER AREA OF FOREIGN COMMUNITY SUPPORT, KFSH APPARENTLY CAN NOT FIND A SUITABLE REPLACEMENT FOR AMCIT

MORTICIAN SCHEDULED TO DEPART IN TWO MONTHS. KFSH DOES NOT OBJECT TO PROVIDING MORTICIAN SERVICES TO FOREIGNERS, BUT IF PRESENT MAN LEAVES WITHOUT REPLACEMENT THERE WILL BE NO WESTERN-QUALIFIED MORTICIAN CAPABLE OF PREPARING REMAINS FOR RETURN TO THE U.S. BETWEEN JIDDA AND DHAHRAN. EXCEPT FOR ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL AND THEIR IMMEDIATE DEPENDENTS, THE PROCEDURES REQUIRED BY SAG TO MOVE BODIES WITHIN THE KINGDOM ARE RESTRICTIVE AND TIME-CONSUMING ENOUGH TO MAKE TRANSPORT TO ONE OF THE TWO LOCATIONS BY ANY BUT CLANDESTINE MEANS FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES IMPOSSIBLE.

4. USLO LOOKS FORWARD TO DISCUSSING THESE AND ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS WITH RMO. PRESENTLY AVAILABLE LOCAL MEDICAL FACILITIES BEYOND THE OUTPATIENT CARE LEVEL GENERALLY RANGE FROM THE PRIMITIVE TO THE UNAVAILABLE. SPECIFIC CASES OF WELL-TRAINED INDIVIDUALS ARE INSUFFICIENT TO ADEQUATELY HANDLE A POPULATION THE SIZE OF THE EXISTING FOREIGN COMMUNITY. EVEN A REMOVAL OF KFSH RESTRICTIONS WOULD PROVIDE ONLY AN IMMEDIATE EASING OF THE CRISIS. ANY LONG-TERM SOLUTION REQUIRES CONSIDERABLE INCREASE IN MEDICAL CAPABILITY. PROJECTED TRANSFER OF DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY TO RIYADH IS FROM A MEDICAL STANDPOINT PRECIPITOUS, IF ADEQUATE MEDICAL FACILITIES ARE NOT IN PLACE AND FUNCTIONING BEFOREHAND.

GRANINGER

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